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ART. XII.—*Remarks on the Site and Ruins of Tammanna Nuwera.*

By SIMON CASSIE CHITTY, Esq., C.M.R.A.S.

(Read 1st February, 1840.)

TAMMANA NUWERA hold sa very important place in the Singhalese history, as having been founded by *Vijaya*, the first in the list of the kings of Ceylon, so far back as 2382 years from the present time, or 543 before the Christian era. It bears in Pali the name of *Tambapanni*, which it is surmised the Greeks and Romans corrupted into *Taprobane*, and applied as an appellation to the island itself. *Tambapanni* signifies "copper-coloured," and is said to refer to the reddish colour of the soil in the place, as *Albion* did to the colour of the chalky cliffs on the southern coast of England.

It would appear that the European writers of the Singhalese history are not agreed with regard to the identification of the part of the island where *Vijaya* effected his first landing, consequently the site of Tammanna Nuwera, which he is stated to have founded in its neighbourhood, was never correctly ascertained. Captain Mahony places it at *Mentott*, near *Manaar*¹; Joinville in the *Wanny*²; and the anonymous author, Philalethes, at *Tambuligamme* or *Tambligam*³; but a universal tradition, of a very long standing, which represented *Vijaya* to have disembarked on a point of land, called *Tundamuni*, near *Putlam*, always pointed it out as being on the east of that place; and this tradition has been verified by the recent discovery of the ruins which I shall presently notice.

I must not omit to mention here, that the Moorish inhabitants of *Putlam*, too indolent to extend their researches beyond the sphere of their village, have always supposed that Tammanna Nuwera stood on the borders of a lake in the neighbourhood, called *Tammanna Villu*; and I, for want of better information, and led by the analogy in the names, was induced to adopt the same opinion in noticing the place in the *Ceylon Gazetteer* which I published in 1833.

The ruins of Tammanna Nuwera are situated on the east side of the *Mee Oya*, in the midst of a deep forest, called *Kandukuli Malé*, within half a mile from that river, and about ten miles from *Putlam* via *Sittiravelli*, in a N.E. direction. The whole of the country about them, as well as the adjacent parts, for many miles, present an un-

¹ *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii., p. 49.² *Ibid*, p. 417.³ *History of Ceylon*, cap. ii., p. 22.

varied scene of jungle, which forms the haunt of elephants and other wild beasts.

Though the existence of these ruins was not unknown to the natives, who frequented the forest to fell timber or gather wild honey, yet none of them ever thought it worth while to inquire into their origin, or to notice them in any way, except now and then to dig about them for hidden treasure, till James Caulfield, Esq., Acting Assistant Government Agent of the District, discovered them in one of his excursions into the interior with a party of friends, in the early part of this year.

Being anxious to furnish the Society with as accurate a description as possible of everything regarding the ruins in question, I embraced the opportunity of a visit I made to *Pullam* in April last to go and inspect them; and I have since caused a survey to be made of the site they occupied by Mr. Van Gunster, the District Surveyor, defraying the costs from my own private fund. The map drawn by Mr. V. G. from the survey is herewith sent, as it explains the positions of the various ruins better than I could do otherwise.

The ruins consist of thirteen groups of pillars of granite, marked in the map Nos. 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 18; of the remains of a *Dágoba* and a well, Nos. 6 and 17; of four tanks, Nos. 1, 3, 20 and 21; of a stone slab lying among the pillars in the group No. 8; of a niche cut in a solid rock, No. 4; of two headless figures of *Buddha*; and of several granite pedestals, besides fragments of bricks and potsherds scattered about in different directions.

The pillars in general exhibit a very rugged surface, and look as if they had been placed there in the rough state in which they were quarried. Several are broken, others are fallen, but the greater part are still maintaining their upright position, in spite of the shocks they frequently receive from the elephants, who are in the habit of rubbing their bodies against them. They, however, appear to have lost a considerable part of their original height, probably from the decomposition of the felspar by long exposure to the atmosphere, as has been the case with those found in other places. On measuring the pillars in the group No. 18, which is the first object that attracts notice, as one emerges from the jungle into the cleared space, I found them varying from 3 to 7 feet in height above ground, but they all nearly tally in their other dimensions, being 1 foot broad and 8 inches deep. The pillars in the group No. 11 alone measured from 9 to 10 feet in height, 1 foot 2 inches in breadth, and 10 inches in depth. With the exception of the pillars in two or three groups, the rest are not fixed with any regularity as to their distance from each other; some are 9 feet asunder and others 3 or 4.

As all the groups of pillars so nearly resemble each other that the description of one will answer the whole, I, therefore, send herewith two drawings representing only the groups Nos. 11 and 15, and for which I am indebted to the kindness of Lieut. Burleigh of the Ceylon Rifles, and Commandant of *Pullam*.

So far as I can judge, these different groups of pillars form the remains of different buildings, appropriated either to religious purposes, or to the residence of the king and his court. It would, however, be absurd to suppose that the pillars supported any roof; for, considering their diminutive height, the rooms would have been of the most paltry dimensions, and they, therefore, like those at *Anurádhapura*, must have formed the basement of upper stories constructed of timber¹. I may also mention that, in nearly all the ruins still remaining in different parts of Ceylon, the pillars yet in existence are of a similar description, or that they must have been adapted to some peculiar style of architecture then prevalent.

I have not been able to find out any trace of private buildings; but this may be ascribed to their having been composed of more perishable materials, perhaps similar to the mud and caljan now used, which, of course, will not long stand the ravages of time. This I infer from the practice which was observed by the Singhalese sovereigns, even till so late as the reign of *Sri Vikrama Rája Singha of Kandy*, of confining the privilege of living in tiled houses in their capitals to the members of the royal family and the adherents of the court, as I find by the following description given of the town of *Kandy* when the English took possession of it in 1803. "It contains no buildings of any consequence except the palace, and a few temples dedicated to Buddha. The streets in general are dirty, the houses poor and mean, built chiefly of mud, thatched with straw and leaves²."

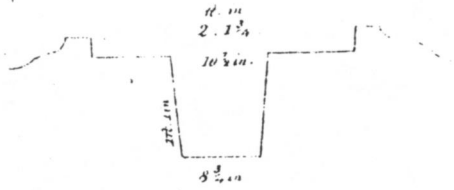
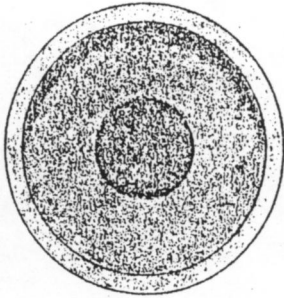
The *Dágoba* is of moderate size, and built entirely of alternate layers of brick and mud; but as people have examined it narrowly for treasure, it has been nearly levelled with the ground.

The well is almost filled up with the accumulated rubbish, and it appears to have been built of some kind of hard stone. This was discovered by Mr. Van Gunster only lately, as the jungle which concealed it was not cleared when I visited the place.

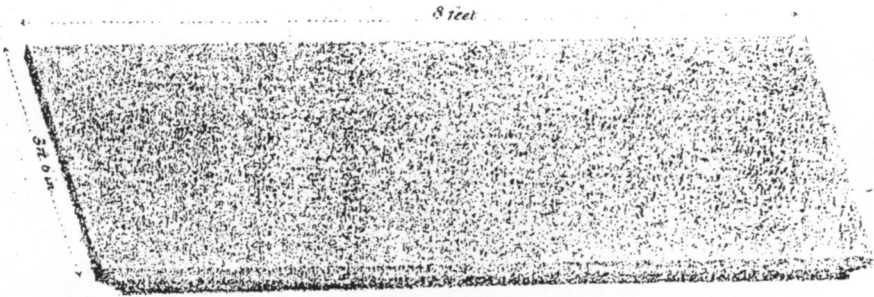
The tanks are still in a tolerably good condition, and from their small size they appear to have been designed, not for the purpose of irrigation, but merely as reservoirs of water for the use of the city

¹ *Ceylon Almanac for 1833*, p. 270.

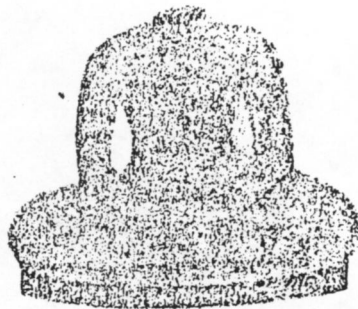
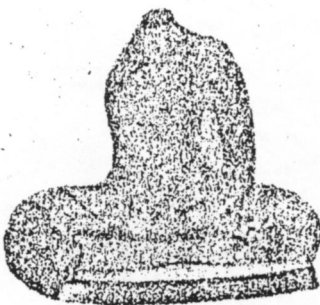
² *CORDINER'S Description of Ceylon*, vol. ii., p. 182.



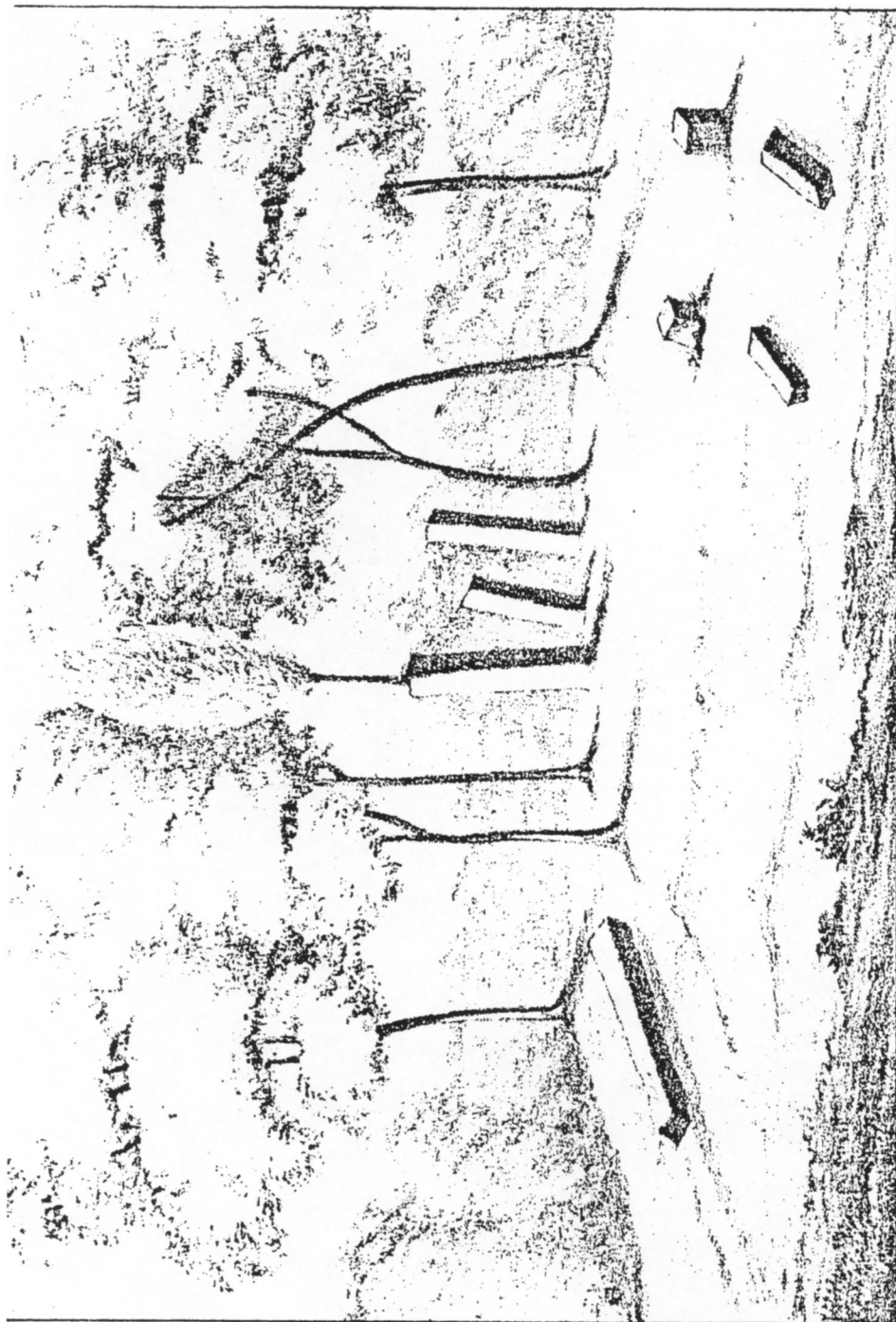
The Rock with the niche cut in it.



The Slab found amongst the Pillars. No 3



Two decollated Buddha Images



RUINS OF TAMMANA NUWERA.
The Group of Pillars, N° 18.

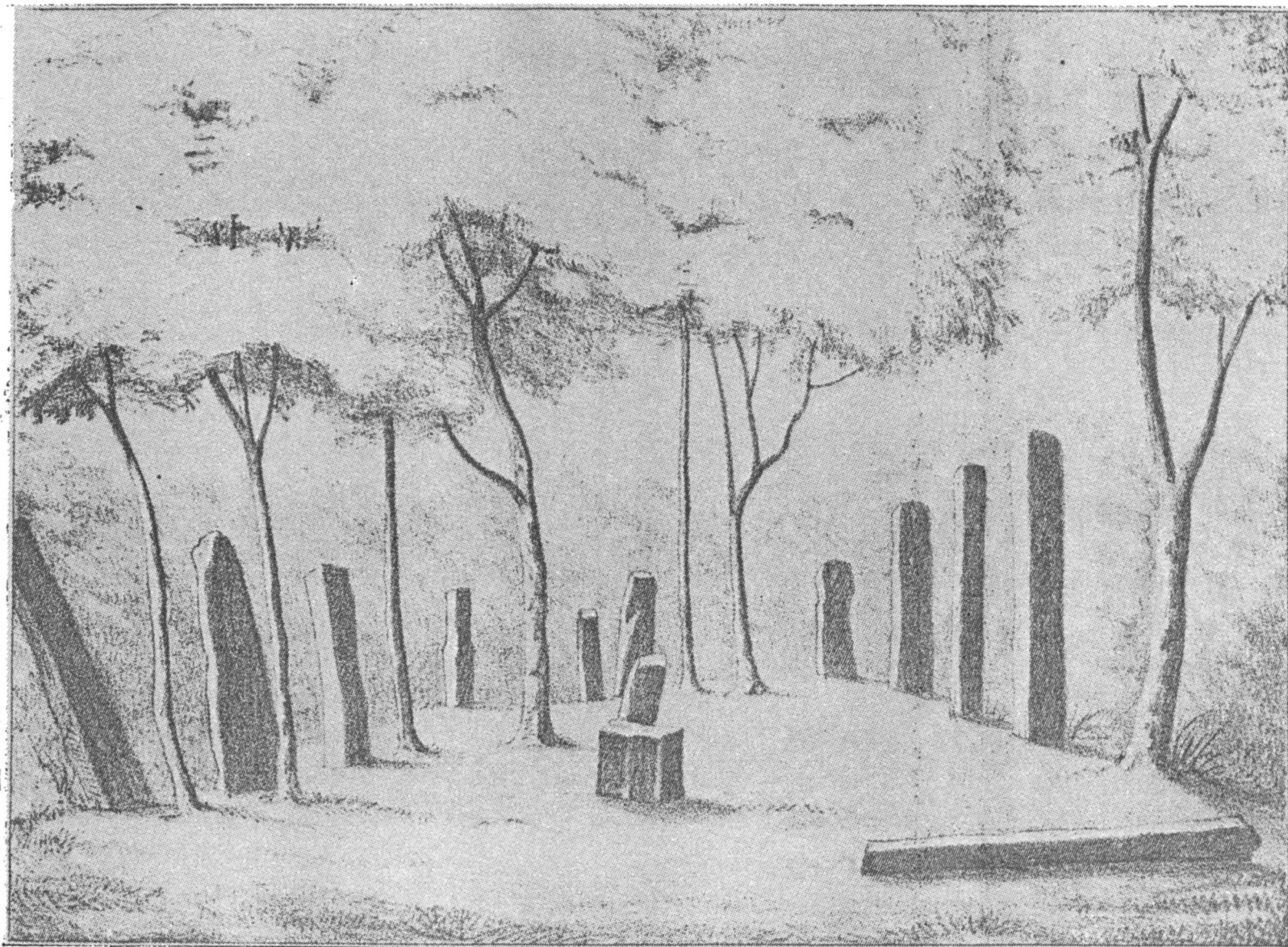
or as bathing-places for the people. The tank No. 20 is always dry, even in the rainy season, when the others are filled to the brim. The water is no doubt carried off by subterraneous drains or passages, but, if such exist, I have not been able to discover them, on account of the inside of the tank being at present overgrown with large thick grass.

The stone slab, found among the pillars in the group No. 8, is 8 feet long and 3 feet 6 inches broad. It is quite smooth, and on one edge it has some mouldings cut. This was probably intended for the step of a temple or for a table to place the idols on; or it may have been something similar to the stone slabs, which are placed as rude altars in the open air, before the sacred tree, near the *Bhuddist* temples, and are usually covered with flowers.

At the head of these ruins, on the east, there are several solid rocks, and in the middle of one of them a niche is hollowed out. It is evident that a *Dágoba* was intended to be built upon this rock, and the hole in question was made to deposit the sacred relic in.

The two figures of *Buddha*, in a sitting posture, are of entire blocks of granite, and they were both found without heads, which appear to have been broken off by violence. Only one of these now remains in the place; the other has been removed to *Pullam*.

Before I conclude these remarks, it may not be out of place to insert here an extract from a short notice of the discovery of the ruins, which I sent to the Editor of the *Columbo Observer*, and which appeared in his paper of the 19th of August last. "It is affirmed that after the death of *Vijaya*, his successor transferred the seat of government to *Upatissa Nuwera*, which he built at *Ella Sattara*; but we are not informed when it was that Tammana Nuwera became finally deserted by its inhabitants. We have however reason to suppose that it contained inhabitants till a very late period, or otherwise the *Dágoba* and the images of *Buddha*, which are found amongst its ruins, could not have been there, as the religion of *Buddha* was introduced into Ceylon only 209 years after the death of *Vijaya*."



W. Herby Ltd

RUINS OF TAMMANA NUWERA.

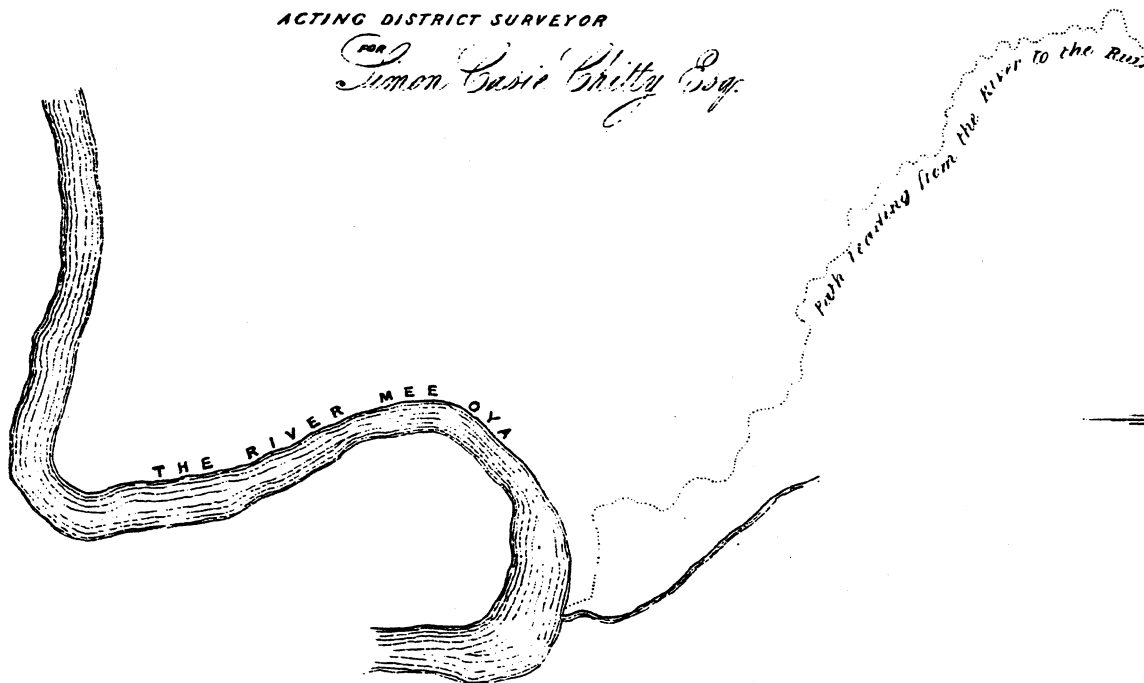
The Group of Pillars N^o 2.

MAP
SHEWING
THE POSITIONS OF THE RUINS OF
TAMMANA NUWERA.

Drawn by M^r. B. Van Gunster.

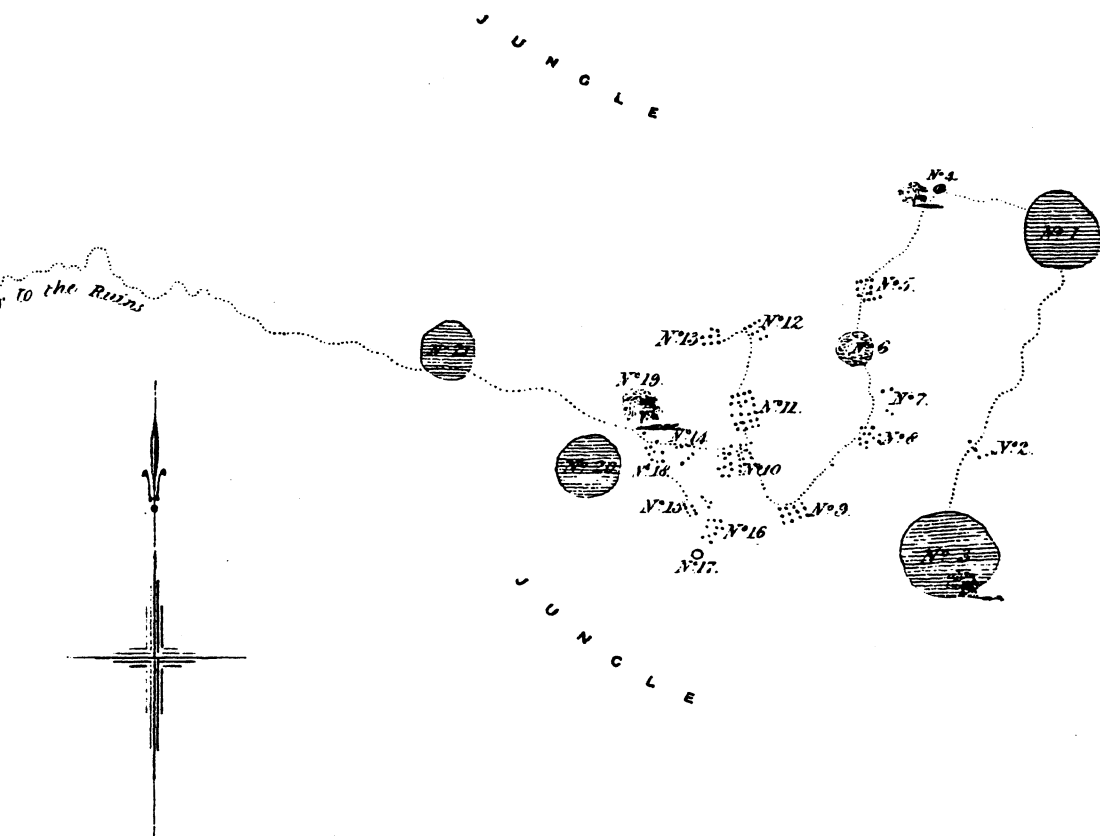
ACTING DISTRICT SURVEYOR

FOR
Jumon Cassie Chetty Esq.



- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | A Tank. |
| 2 | Five Pillars. |
| 3 | A Tank. |
| 4 | A Beck with a niche |
| 5 | Thirteen Pillars. |
| 6 | The remains of a De |
| 7 | Four Pillars. |

SCALE OF
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EXPLANATIONS.

8	Thirteen Pillars.	15	Eleven Pillars.
9	Twelve Pillars.	16	Ten Pillars.
10	Twenty five Pillars.	17	The remains of a Well.
11	Twenty three Pillars.	18	Eleven Pillars.
12	Ten Pillars.	19	A large Tamarind Tree.
13	Eight Pillars.	20	A Tank.
14	Seven Pillars.	21	A Tank.

SCALE OF CHAINS.

